



Policy on Attendance & Absence Management

Date approved by Assurance sub-Committee:
Latest review date:

May 2026
May 2029

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Cernach Housing Association recognises that on occasions it may be necessary for employees to be absent from work. However, it is important that employees are supported to maintain good levels of attendance at work, to ensure we provide a reliable service for our customers.
- 1.2 This policy is designed to help all employees achieve good attendance, and to ensure that a consistent and fair approach in managing attendance is adopted throughout Cernach Housing Association.
- 1.3 This policy and the guidelines it contains work in conjunction with but is not limited to other policies such as discipline & grievance, dignity at work, health and safety and managing stress.

2. Aims of the Policy

- To manage attendance in a way that is centred around employee wellbeing and reflects genuine concern for employees.
- To develop a positive attitude towards attendance throughout the organisation
- To set clear expectations for standards of attendance that we require from our employees.
- To separate two processes: attendance and absence management and provide guidelines for employees and managers in the implementation of these.
- To establish monitoring processes to look at the causes of absence and, where possible, develop a programme of supportive and preventative measures.
- To ensure training and support is available to both managers and employees.

3. Equality and human rights

- 3.1 The Association's Equality and Human Rights policy, outlines our commitment to promote a zero tolerance to unfair treatment or discrimination to any person or group of persons, particularly on the basis of any of the protected characteristics. This includes ensuring that everyone has equal access to information and services, and, to this end, the Association will make available a copy of this document in a range of alternative formats including large print, translated into another language or by data transferred to voice.

- 3.2 We are also aware of the potential for policies to inadvertently discriminate against an individual or group of individuals. To help tackle this and ensure that it does not occur, best practice suggests that organisations carry out Equality Impact assessments to help identify any part of a policy that may be discriminatory so that this can be addressed (please see section 6 of the Equality and Human Rights policy for more information).
- 3.3 In line with section 6 of the Equality and Human Rights Policy, the Association carried out an Equality Impact Assessment on this policy and no remedial action was identified as necessary. The full assessment is appended at the end of this policy. The Association's Equality and Human Rights policy, which was approved by the Committee in April 2025, outlines our commitment to promote a zero tolerance to unfair treatment or discrimination to any person or group of persons, particularly on the basis of any of the protected characteristics. This includes ensuring that everyone has equal access to information and services, and, to this end, the Association will make available a copy of this document in a range of alternative formats including large print, translated into another language or by data transferred to voice.

4 Definitions

4.1 Absence

Managing absence relates to managing an employee back to work, including making reasonable adjustments, where possible, and dealing with the ability to carry out their work duties, taking into consideration any medical, the employee's comments and the business needs.

4.2 Attendance

Managing attendance refers to dealing with unacceptable levels of short term, frequent absences, with no reference to any particular absence or medical condition. We will follow this in line with our absence management and disciplinary procedures.

5. Principles

5.1 Cernach Housing Association requires satisfactory attendance from all employees to meet its objectives.

- If your level of attendance is unsatisfactory you will be informed

what improvement is required and possible consequences of failure to do so (which may include disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal).

- The attendance management process is not concerned with reasons for absence but with number of periods of absence/ days absent (excluding underlying health conditions protected under the Equality Act 2010 and pregnancy related absences, including employees under fertility treatment, who have had an embryo transfer and may be pregnant).
- If an underlying health condition is causing absence(s), then we will seek advice if appropriate and consider any reasonable adjustments suggested.
- Managers will conduct return to work interviews for every period of sickness absence, to ensure an employee's fitness for work and to discuss any wellbeing concerns.
- You need to adhere strictly to our absence reporting procedures. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action and occupational sick pay being withheld.
- Managers will maintain accurate, up-to-date records for all employees to manage sickness absence effectively.

6. Absence Monitoring

6.1 It is important to ensure that records of sickness absence are maintained to allow accurate recording of information required for sick pay and management purposes. Combined with this good information allows patterns to be identified and can be an early indication of underlying health conditions. If issues are identified and acted upon early, it is more likely that a successful conclusion for both parties can be achieved.

6.2 Cernach Housing Association will keep the following records on employee absence securely in personnel files

- Absence dates: start and end dates of each absence
- Reason for Absence: Sickness, holiday, personal leave, etc.
- Medical Certificates: Doctor's notes or fit notes if applicable.
- Return-to-Work Interviews: Notes from any meetings held upon the employee's return.
- Absence Patterns: Any recurring patterns or trends in absences.
- Absence Duration: Total number of days absent.
- Notification of Absence Records: How and when the employee notified

the employer of the absence and ongoing contract during the period, if it is anticipated to last in excess of 7 days.

- 6.3 Anonymised aggregated statistics will be used for monitoring purposes of absence levels and causes of sickness absence within the organisation. Individual cases will not be discussed as they are a confidential record between an employee and those involved in managing the case.
- 6.4 Having maintained attendance records, managers will be expected to discuss their aggregated statistics at management team meetings and at departmental meetings with staff.
- 6.5 A summary covering the preceding twelve months will be taken to the Assurance Sub meeting after the end of the financial year, as part of staff leave and absence reporting. This reporting forms part of the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) return for staff statistical information and is calculated in line with SHR's Technical Guidance to include:
- Total number of sickness absence (in working days)/total number of working days available per year
 - The percentage of working days lost through sickness absence
- 6.6 For internal monitoring, we will also manage and monitor the level of absence rate, minus long term absences.

7. Absence Reporting Procedures

7.1 Reporting

- 7.1.1 Employees that cannot attend work, either due to illness or for any other reason, not previously authorised, must contact their line manager (or, if not available, another manager) as soon as is reasonably possible. It is expected that contact is made as soon as possible before their usual start time. If this is not possible, contact should be by 10am (within one hour of their start time). In the event of an emergency where an employee cannot make contact on day one of their absence, they should ensure that someone else makes contact on their behalf. The responsibility is for the employee to make the contact to report absence, and failing to do so will result in the unauthorised absence procedure being followed by their line manager.

7.2 Certification

- 7.2.1 For every period of sickness absence employees are required to complete a self-certification form which is included as part of the return to work process.

- 7.2.2 If an employee continues to be absent for more than seven consecutive days, they must provide a fit note (which can be obtained from identified healthcare professionals) to their line manager as soon as possible.
- 7.2.3 The fit note will indicate whether the employee is 'not fit for work' or 'may be fit for work'. If the 'may be fit for work' box is selected, the employee will be contacted by their line manager and asked to attend a meeting to discuss any adjustments suggested. Employers are not obliged to follow the suggested adjustments, however if these are discussed and are not possible the employee will be treated as not fit for work. If appropriate clarification may be sought from occupational health or the health professional that issued the fit note.
- 7.2.4 If a phased return to work is agreed, the days that an employee remains absent within the agreed period will count as one period of absence.
- 7.2.5 An employee is able to return to work on the expiry or before the expiry of their fit note as long as the fit note does not state that a further assessment of their health is required before returning to work. If an employee requests to return to work before the expiry of their fit note, we will carry out a risk assessment which may involve seeking professional advice.

7.3 Keeping in Touch

7.3.1 It is important that the employee and line manager agree the best method, contact details and frequency of keeping in touch during periods of sickness absence. During contact and meetings, the employee is expected to keep their line manager up to date about the following points:

- the reason for their absence
- the predicted recovery and/or treatment, and
- when they expect to return to work

7.3.2 Keeping in contact is an important part of Cernach Housing Association ensuring the wellbeing of their employees who are on sickness absence. Therefore, if contact is not maintained as agreed, a manager will make all efforts to contact the employee.

7.4 Failure to Comply

7.4.1 Where an employee does not follow reporting, certification, or keeping-in-touch arrangements occupational sick pay may be withheld.

7.4.2 Failure to comply with these requirements may also lead to disciplinary action against an employee in accordance with the disciplinary procedure. If we suspect that an employee has falsified their absence or has deliberately misled the organisation, this will be investigated which may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

7.5 Return to Work

7.5.1 A detailed return to work meeting will be carried out after every period of unplanned sickness absence. The purpose of a return-to-work meeting is to establish if an employee is fit to return to work and to discuss any wellbeing concerns. This meeting will be carried out by the employee's line manager (or another manager if they are not available) on the first day of your return to work. Return to work meeting forms contain confidential information and will only be viewed by those involved in managing the case.

7.5.2 Other records relating to your absence will also be kept in your personal file and may only be viewed by authorised personnel as above. These records may include but will not be limited to:

- 'Keeping in Touch' file notes
- GP Fit Notes
- GP/OT Medical Reports
- Absence Review Meeting file notes

7.6 Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

7.6.1 If an employee meets the eligibility criteria to SSP they will receive this. The scale of entitlement to SSP is reviewed by the government and details of this can be found at the following link. www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay

7.6.2 If an employee is no longer entitled to SSP, they may be entitled to relevant benefits. You can enquire about this at their nearest job centre or through this link - www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus

7.6.3 Employees will be informed if they are not entitled to SSP and provided with the appropriate government form. It is the responsibility of individual employees to claim any Government benefit/s that they may be entitled to.

7.7 Occupational Sick Pay

7.7.1 In any one rolling period of 52 weeks, in line with your EVH Terms of Conditions of Employment, we will pay a sickness allowance in line with the

following:

Continuous service at the date sickness starts	Full allowance paid for	Half allowance paid for
Up to 1 year	5 weeks	5 weeks
Over 1 year and under 2 years	9 weeks	9 weeks
Over 2 years and under 3 years	18 weeks	18 weeks
Over 3 years and under 5 years	22 weeks	22 weeks
Over 5 years	26 weeks	26 weeks

8 Attendance Management

- 8.1 We will aim to assist you in maintaining a good attendance levels. This will involve maintaining good records, ensuring return to work meetings are completed and discussing support for any identified underlying causes of sickness absence.
- 8.2 If an employee's attendance does not improve, the organisation will manage this in line with the disciplinary procedure, up to and including dismissal.
- 8.3 If at any stage during this process it is identified that the employee has an underlying health condition, medical information will be sought, and further discussion will take place prior to deciding the next steps.
- 8.4 Absence periods related to pregnancy, including employees undergoing IVF, who have had an embryo transfer and may be pregnant or underlying health conditions classed as a disability under the Equality Act 2010 will not be considered for the purposes of the attendance management process.

9. Attendance review triggers

- 9.1 Where "rolling" absence levels fall into one of the following categories, an absence review meeting will take place:
- 3 separate occasions of sickness of absence within a rolling 6-month period,

or

- A total of 10 days absence within a rolling 12-month period.
- 9.2 Additionally, where a pattern of persistent short-term absence is identified, or the line manager identifies a pattern of absences occurring at the beginning or end of a week; during school holidays; coinciding with sporting or other events; or when an employee reports sick on the same day that a leave request had been declined this will commence an absence review process. In order to consider patterns in an employee's absence history, managers will review absence data from previous years, using the organisation's time reporting system Kelio.
- 9.3 The line manager may also commence the formal process where there is evidence that an employee regularly remains just below the absence trigger point due to minor health issues, where there is no underlying cause.
- 9.4 If you have had 2 absences within this six month period, your line manager should advise you at your return-to-work meeting that any further absences during the relevant six month period will result in a discussion taking place under the informal process and it will trigger an absence review.
- 9.5 An absence review meeting will be held by your line manager, or other manager as appropriate, and will consider the following:
- the reasons for and impact of your absences,
 - any patterns of absence,
 - the likelihood of further absences,
 - whether medical advice is required. If medical advice has been obtained, the review will consider the advice given and whether further advice / support is required,
 - what, if any, measures might improve your health and / or attendance,
 - agreeing a way forward, action that will be taken and a timescale for review,
 - If you are at risk of dismissal on the grounds of persistent short-term absence or unsatisfactory attendance you will be advised if it is possible that this stage may be reached,
 - in the event that dismissal is under consideration, we will determine if there is a reasonable likelihood of you achieving the desired level of attendance within a reasonable time frame.
 - If required, the process will be the process under the Association's Disciplinary policy, up to and including dismissal.
- 9.6 An absence review will be monitored for a period of six months, after which a review meeting will be held to determine if your attendance has now reached a satisfactory level.

- If you are absent during the 6 months monitoring period, it will result in an Informal Action note being issued under the informal process of the Disciplinary policy.
- If required, the process will be the process under the Association's Disciplinary policy, up to and including dismissal.

10. Absence Management (long term absence or chronic health problems)

- 10.1 The Association will adopt a sympathetic and supportive approach to employees with a long-term and/or chronic health condition. If you find yourself in such a position you should be confident that your manager will support you when approached.
- 10.2 If you are absent for 4 weeks or more, you will be asked to attend welfare meetings with your line manager. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss:
- Current state of health
 - Likely timescale for a return to work
 - Long term ability to carry out normal duties (where appropriate).
- 10.3 These welfare meetings can take place in your home or may also take place within Cernach Housing Association's office, or another mutually agreed venue.
- We are committed to helping employees return to work from long-term absence.
 - We will maintain regular contact with employees on long-term ill health absence as appropriate to your circumstances. We will seek to meet with employees on long-term ill health absence to consult with them regarding their absence and ability to return to work.
- 10.4 The following points will always be considered in relation to long-term absence:
- The nature of the illness and any contributing factors
 - The likely duration and/or frequency of the absence(s)
 - Any actions that can be taken by the employee
 - Any reasonable adjustments that the organisation could make
 - Any possible redeployment opportunities
 - The nature of the duties carried out by the employee in relation to their health conditions
 - The needs of the business and the impact that the employee's absence may have upon this,
 - The employee's entitlement to statutory and/or occupational sick pay, and
 - Any external advice provided in relation to the case
- 10.5 You may be requested to attend an assessment with an Occupational Health Physician. Medical reports may also be requested from your GP/consultant/

specialist/psychiatrist etc on the current state of your illness, they may also be requested where you are suffering from an underlying medical condition even though you may not have been off sick for a prolonged period. Where you fail to attend a medical without prior notice, a cancellation fee may be charged to you.

- 10.6 If a medical professional makes suggestions for any adjustments, these will be discussed prior to your return to work to determine if these can be accommodated, along with any suggestions that you or we may also have made. Although we are not bound by the doctor's suggestions, we will make all possible efforts to accommodate your prompt return and good attendance. If we agree, any adjustments, we will also set time scales and reviews to assess if they are still required and suitable.
- 10.7 When managing a long-term absence, a termination of employment for the reasons of ill health capability may be considered where all other options have been exhausted, and the organisation can no longer sustain the absence. We will ensure that we seek the appropriate advice if and when necessary.

11. Reasonable adjustments

- 11.1 If a medical professional makes suggestions for reasonable adjustments, the line manager will discuss these with the employee prior to their return to work. The purpose of this discussion will be to determine if adjustments can be accommodated, and to consider any suggestions made by the employee or line manager. Employers are not obliged to follow the suggested adjustments, however any adjustments suggested will always be given thorough consideration by the organisation. If reasonable adjustments are agreed they will be accompanied by set time scales and reviews to assess if they are still required and suitable.
- 11.2 When managing a long-term absence, it is possible that termination of employment for the reason of ill health capability may be considered. Prior to this any possible redeployment opportunities for the employee will be considered. This decision will only be taken where all other options have been exhausted, and the organisation can no longer sustain the absence. The organisation will seek the appropriate advice if and when necessary.

12 Dishonest absence

- 12.1 If the employee is found to falsify or exaggerate their absence, this will be treated as gross misconduct. An investigation will be carried out in accordance with our disciplinary procedure and the employee may be subject to disciplinary action up to including dismissal.

13 Other Provisions

13.1 Absence and holidays

- 13.1.1 If during an authorised period of annual leave, the employee falls ill, and provides a self-certificate or fit note, we may count the period as sick leave and not as annual leave. The employee must speak to their line manager on the first day of their return to work or earlier if possible, providing the necessary certification.
- 13.1.2 If there is a public holiday during an employee's period of sickness, and the employee provides a self-certificate or fit note this will be counted as sick leave, and the holiday will not be deducted from their overall allowance.
- 13.1.3 Employees continue to accrue their full holiday entitlement when on sickness absence. If an employee is unable to take their full holiday entitlement due to long-term sickness absence, any remainder will be carried over to the next holiday year.
- 13.1.4 There is a provision with the EVH terms and conditions which states "*if you are off on long-term sick leave of more than 6 months, we may reduce your annual leave pay to statutory minimum requirements*". Cernach would only do this after speaking to the employee and taking account of the facts.
- 13.1.5 We recognise that, in some cases, a holiday may aid in the employee's recovery and the employee may be fit enough to go on holiday. If the employee intends to go on holiday while on sickness absence, the employee should contact their line manager as soon as reasonably practical to discuss this and agree how this is processed, either as sick pay or using their annual leave. Appropriate medical advice may be sought in such circumstances

13.2 Medical and dental appointments

Where possible medical and dental appointments should be arranged out with working hours. More information is detailed in the flexi time policy advising on this.

13.3 Conduct whilst off sick

When an employee is on sickness absence, they are still bound by their contract of employment and all organisational policies, including the Code of Conduct. The organisation expects that you do not participate in activities that are conflicting with the reason for their ongoing absence. Any breach in respect of this will be managed using the Disciplinary procedure. This includes conduct on social media sites as well as any other publicly made remarks regarding our customers, work colleagues, partners and anyone else who is connected with the organisation.

13.4 Cosmetic procedures

Absence due to cosmetic procedures (whether carried out in the UK or abroad) will not fall under the sick leave or pay unless it is recommended by health professionals. The employee will discuss this with their line manager

and provide the relevant evidence of this. If the treatment is not recommended by a health professional, employees should therefore request time off and agree with their line manager how the absence will be processed, e.g. annual leave or unpaid leave.

13.5 Fertility treatment

There are a wide range of fertility treatments available, and absences relating to these will be processed as sickness absence or leave for medical appointments.

13.6 Stress related absences

If an employee is on sickness absence due to stress, their manager will endeavour to find out the underlying cause so that appropriate actions can be taken (if any) and in particular to determine whether work factors are contributing to the employees' stressors. The line manager will consider with the employee whether steps can be taken to support them to return to work. The line manager will follow procedures as outlined in the stress management policy.

14. General Data Protection Regulations

- 14.1 Cernach HA will treat personal data in line with its obligations under the current data protection regulations and Cernach's data protection policy. Information regarding how personal data will be used and the basis for processing this is provided in our employee privacy notice.

15 Policy Review

- 15.1 This policy will be reviewed by the Assurance Sub Committee at least every three years to ensure it continues to meet the requirements of the Association or in line with EVH updates, whichever is sooner.

Resident engagement policy



<h2>Cernach Housing Association Equality Impact Assessment Tool</h2>	
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Name of the policy / proposal to be assessed	Managing Absence and Attendance policy	Is this a new policy / proposal or a revision?	Revision
Person(s) responsible for the assessment	Emma McShane, Head of Corporate Services		
1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy / proposal	This policy is to set out the Association’s approach to maximising attendance and managing absences. It covers short term absences as well as long-term absences and provides parameters and guidance to line managers in implementing this policy.		
2. Who is intended to benefit from the policy / proposal? (e.g. applicants, tenants, staff, contractors)	Staff.		
3. What outcomes are wanted from this policy / proposal ? (e.g. the benefits to customers)	Provide a framework for monitoring attendance and absences, provide guidance on approaching conversations in relation to sickness, attendance and absence management.		

Resident engagement policy



4. Which **protected characteristics** could be **affected** by the proposal? (*tick all that apply*)

- Age
 Disability
 Marriage & Civil Partnership
 Pregnancy/Maternity
 Religion or Belief
 Gender
 Race
 Gender Reassignment
 Sexual Orientation

5. If the policy / proposal is not relevant to any of the **protected characteristics** listed in part 4, state why and end the process here.
 After consideration, there are some protected characteristics which could be influenced by this policy.

	Positive impact(s)	Negative impact(s)
<p>6. Describe the likely positive or negative impact(s) the policy / proposal could have on the groups identified in part 4</p>	<p>Age/Disability/Pregnancy/Maternity – The policy provides clear guidance regarding health conditions which should be taken into account sensitively and ensures that those with health conditions in relation to any protected characteristic are not disadvantaged. This is ensured by providing discretion to managers precisely so that individual circumstances can be taken into account.</p>	

Resident engagement policy



7. What **actions** are **required** to address the impacts arising from this assessment? (*This might include; collecting additional data, putting monitoring in place, specific actions to mitigate negative impacts*).

No further actions required

Signed: Emma McShane(Job title): Head of Corporate Services

Date the Equality Impact Assessment was completed: 30 April 2026

Please attach the completed document as an appendix to your policy / proposal report